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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8264
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1928
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0166
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1721
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2390
RUEHMT/AMCONSUL MONTREAL 0289
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 1148
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000764

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/27/2018

TAGS: **PGOV PREL HA**
SUBJECT: PREVAL NAMES BOB MANUEL PRIME MINISTER DESIGNATE -
CORRECTED COPY

REF: A) PORT AU PRINCE 00763 B) PORT AU PRINCE 00701

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires A. I. Thomas C. Tighe. Reason: E.O.
12958 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (U) This message contains bio data in para 8 omitted in
ref a.

Summary

¶2. (SBU) President Preval on May 25 named his close political adviser Robert Manuel as Prime Minister-designate. Manuel is part of Preval's inner circle, and a consummate behind-the-scenes political operative. He was Secretary of State for Public Security during part of Preval's first term, and managed Preval's 2006 presidential campaign. However, he has neither firm policy experience nor a strong public political persona. Even as Preval's adviser, Manuel has spent large amounts of time in Guatemala, the home country of his spouse. His prospects for confirmation by both houses of parliament are questionable. End summary.

¶3. (SBU) Just before midnight Sunday May 25, President Preval named political advisor Robert Manuel as his candidate for Prime Minister. The move follows the failure of his previous PM nominee, Ericq Pierre, to obtain parliamentary confirmation (reftel). Manuel's nomination came as a surprise, since Manuel was seen as difficult to confirm in the parliament. Jean Max Bellerive Minister of Planning under outgoing PM Alexis, as seen as the frontrunner with the kind of policy experience needed to manage Haiti's current economic challenges.

¶4. (C) However, Embassy sources in parliament say Preval encountered opposition to Bellerive in the parliament, since Bellerive was too closely associated with the policies of outgoing Prime Minister Alexis. Post believes Bellrive is a Canadian citizen, which, if true, certainly entered into Preval's calculations of his ability to be confirmed. Dual nationality is not permitted under Haiti's constitution.

Parliamentary Confirmation Will Not be Easy

¶5. (C) Certain party leaders initially expressed cautious support for Manuel and hoped he would be confirmed. Fusion spokesman Micha Gaillard told the press May 27 that Manuel had strong security credentials and that his party would immediately begin talks with their deputies and Senators on confirming Manuel. Senate President Kely Bastien the same day said that there had been intensive consultations between President Preval, himself, and Chamber of Deputies President Eric Jean Jacques over the nomination of Manuel. Bastien would not comment on the likelihood of Manuel passing the Senate. Bastien told Poloff privately, however, that Manuel would encounter difficulty being confirmed.

¶6. (SBU) Lespwa deputy Patrick Dumond told Poloff May 27 that the majority of the bloc in the Chamber of Deputies bloc the Coalition of Progressive Parliamentarians (CPP) opposed Manuel. (Note: the votes of the CPP helped assure the defeat of Eric Pierre in the Chamber of Deputies -- see reftel. End Note) Dumond also reported that when Preval had consulted with the CPP to discuss a new nominee, the President indicated he would select either Bellerive or Gue. MINUSTAH reported to Polcouns that Senator Rudy Heriveaux strongly opposes Manuel.

Comment

17. (SBU) Both houses of the parliament will now name committees to examine Manuel's constitutional eligibility, including Haitian citizenship going back two generations, and legal residency and property ownership in Haiti. Robert

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Manuel's name surfaced as a PM candidate only after Ericq Pierre was voted down by the Chamber of Deputies May 12 (reftel). Post held Acting Minister of Planning Bellerive and Secretary of State for Agriculture Joanes Gue as the more realistic PM candidates, especially given the widespread perception that Manuel was all but unconfirmable.

Bio Data

18. (U) Manuel is 55 years old and was trained as an architect. He served on the staff of President Jean Bertrand Aristide during his first term prior to the 1991 coup. Manuel was Secretary of State for Public Security 1998-99 during Preval's first term, but resigned, reportedly under pressure from then ex-President Aristide, and went abroad. He managed Preval's 2006 presidential campaign. He has published a volume of poems and a study of Haitian novelist Jacques Stephen Alexis. Manuel is the great grandson of Haitian President Tancrede August (1912-1913). His current wife (his second marriage) is from Guatemala, a country where Manuel has spent considerable time during his tenure as adviser to President Preval. In addition to his native French and Creole, Manuel speaks Spanish and excellent English.

TIGHE